



POLICY PRIORITY: STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE

Cross-system Preparation, Professional Development & Support



Administration & Implementation

- Implementation of the **English as a Second Language (ESL) & Bilingual Credential** through the Illinois Gateways to Opportunity network
- Successful advocacy for infant/toddler child care staff who hold or earn the **Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential** to receive six college credits, with full implementation by Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024)
- State waiver of the application fee for Gateways credentials with additional Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) funds, leading to an **increase in applicants for the Infant Toddler Credential**
- Continued administration of the **ExceleRate Child Care Center Pilot**, funded through PDG B-5, demonstrating a successful model for increasing workforce compensation and credentialing
- Launch of **Birth to Five Illinois Action Councils**, structured specifically to incorporate workforce voice in the decision-making process
- With PDG B-5 funding, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies led the development of a **virtual reality-based Prior Learning Assessment** in which students can demonstrate Early Childhood Education Level 2 competencies and receive college credit for them



Legislation

- Passage of the Student Debt Assistance Act (SB 3032), **prohibiting the withholding of academic transcripts** by any institution of higher learning from a current or former student because the student owes a debt to the institution
- Passage of the Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Program Act (SB 3925), providing **loan repayment assistance** to human services professionals working in a community-based agency that contracts with or is grant-funded by a state agency
- Creation of the Holistic Mental Health Care for Youth in Care Task Force (HB 4306), which will make recommendations regarding **mental health and wellness services provided to youth in foster care**, including services for infants and toddlers

(Cross-system Preparation, Professional Development & Support Accomplishments continued on the next page.)





POLICY PRIORITY: STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE

Cross-system Preparation, Professional Development & Support (continued)



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Advocacy to ensure increased allocations for **infant/toddler workforce compensation** as part of overall appropriations to the Early Childhood Block Grant and Early Intervention and home visiting programs
- Allocation of **\$110 million** in federal COVID-19 relief funds for the **Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE)**
- Application of federal COVID-19 relief funds to **grow the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Database** to include 107 consultants in all 102 counties, increasing access to mental health supports statewide
- Leveraging of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II) to hire **26 new infant/early childhood mental health consultants** for the Illinois Department of Human Services Caregiver Connections program



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Promotion of **infant/toddler workforce pipeline scholarships** through ECACE, with an increase in applications and over 1,000 students pursuing higher education opportunities



Strong State & Community Structures



Administration & Implementation

- Establishment and implementation of **Birth to Five Illinois Action Councils and Family Councils** through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Creation of the **Early Childhood Transformation Team** to continue advancing the recommendations from the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding
- Launch of the **Chicago Early Childhood Integrated Data System** to integrate data systems across services in the City of Chicago
- Establishment of **Early Learning Council committees** to support early childhood systems building efforts



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Promotion of Birth to Five Illinois and **recruitment of diverse stakeholders** as members of Birth to Five Illinois' community-level Action Councils and Family Councils